

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

March 26, 2020

The Franklin County Commission and Mayors recognize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our communities. We are extremely concerned with the health, safety, and overall well-being of our community. We are cognizant that mitigation efforts must be taken to respond quickly to prevent and slow down the continued spread of COVID-19. Our nation is founded on the notion of individual responsibility, and we are proud of our residents and businesses who have accepted responsibility and proactively taken measures to slow the spread of this disease.

Many health organizations including the World Health Organization, the Center for Disease Control, and the Department of Public Health have communicated and emphasized best practices based on scientific evidence regarding the most effective approaches to slow the transmission of communicable diseases generally and COVID-19 specifically. One proven way to slow the transmission of COVID-19 is to limit interactions among people to the greatest extent practicable.

On March 23, Governor Kemp declared a public health state of emergency and signed a related Executive Declaration which mandated certain measures be implemented and enforced by the Department of Public Health. These measures underscored the need to limit interaction.

We are urging **ALL** citizens, businesses, travelers, and guests to follow the best practice guidelines and **abide** by the state-wide mandates.

Moreover, we are emphasizing the following community initiatives in concert with the Georgia Executive Declaration:

Shelter-in-Place

- Those at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19, people who are sick, and people who are medically fragile should remain in their residence to the extent possible, except to seek medical care.
- All persons should self-isolate in their places of residence to the maximum extent feasible and are strongly encouraged to leave only for Essential Activities, to operate Essential Businesses, or to perform Essential Government Functions.

Social Distancing

- All persons, businesses, and operations should implement “**Social Distancing**” by:
 - maintaining a minimum distance of six (6') feet from other individuals
 - washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer
 - covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands)
 - regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces
 - do not shake hands.



- All public and private gatherings of more than ten (10) persons occurring outside a residence are prohibited, except for as otherwise expressly permitted herein. Nothing in this Declaration prohibits the gathering of members of a residence.
- Individuals engaged in any Essential Travel are expected to comply with Social Distancing Requirements, to the greatest extent feasible.

Business Activity

- All Essential Businesses are encouraged to remain open, and to the greatest extent feasible, shall comply with Social Distancing. Physical contact with the public should be minimized.
- Nonessential Businesses should cease all activities except Minimum Basic Operations. Physical contact with the public should be minimized.
- Nonessential Businesses may continue operations as long as no more than 10 persons (including employees) are allowed inside at any one time and the Social Distancing Requirements are followed. *If you are unable to maintain the (6') feet minimum distance between persons, the operations should cease regardless of number of persons.*
- Businesses may continue operations consisting exclusively of employees or contractors performing activities at their own residences

Exceptions to the above initiatives include individuals performing or accessing Essential Governmental Functions, performing Essential Activities, performing work at an Essential Business, providing service or performing M&O work of Essential Infrastructure, obtaining services at any Healthcare Operations, and carrying out Minimum Basic Operations.

Failure to comply with any of the state mandates or community initiatives constitutes an imminent threat to public health. The Department of Public Health is charged by the Governor to enforce the content of the Executive Declaration including those items not listed in the community initiatives.

Franklin County, its local governments, and more importantly, its citizens have a responsibility to protect the health of the family, friends, and community that we love. Let's all unite and do our part to "flatten the curve".

Jointly issued by:

City of Canon
Franklin County BOC
City of Lavonia

City of Carnesville
City of Franklin Springs
City of Royston

For purposes of clarity the following definitions are provided:

Minimum Basic Operations:

- The minimum necessary activities to maintain the value of the business's inventory, ensure security, process payroll and employee benefits, or for related functions.
- The minimum necessary activities to facilitate employees of the business being able to continue to work remotely from their residences.

Essential Activities:

- Activities or tasks essential to the health and safety of residents, family, household members, partners, significant others (including, but not limited to, pets), including obtaining medical supplies or medication, visiting a health care professional, or obtaining supplies they need to work from home
- Obtaining necessary services or supplies for residents and their family (i.e. canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supplies, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, and any other household consumer products, and products necessary to maintain the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences)
- Outdoor activity, such as, by way of example and without limitation, walking, hiking, running, or bicycling. However, individuals shall not engage in team sports and/or activities which result in the congregation of ten (10) or more persons. Individuals engaged in outdoor activities shall comply with Social Distancing Requirements.
- Caring for a family member or pet in another household

Essential Business:

- Healthcare Operations and Essential Infrastructure;
- Grocery stores, farmers' markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, food banks, convenience stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale or donation of canned food, dry goods, fresh fruits and vegetables, pet supply, fresh meats, fish, and poultry, and any other household consumer products (such as cleaning and personal care products). This includes stores that sell groceries and also sell other nongrocery products, and products necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences;
- Food cultivation, farming, livestock, fishing and landscaping services;
- Businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life;
- Newspapers, television, radio, and other media services;
- Gas stations and auto-supply, auto-repair, and related facilities;
- Banks and related financial institutions;
- Funeral homes;

- Hardware stores;
- Plumbers, electricians, exterminators, and other service providers who provide services that are necessary to maintaining the safety, sanitation, and essential operation of residences, Essential Activities, and Essential Businesses;
- Businesses providing mailing and shipping services, including post office boxes;
- Unless otherwise ordered by the Franklin County Board of Education, educational institutions-including private K-12 schools, colleges, and universities-for purposes of facilitating distance learning or performing essential functions, provided that Social Distancing Requirements are maintained, to the greatest extent possible;
- Laundromats, drycleaners, and laundry service providers;
- Restaurants and other facilities that prepare and serve food, but only for delivery or carry out. Schools and other entities that typically provide free food services to students or members of the public may continue to do so under this Declaration. Schools and other entities that provide food services under this exemption shall not permit the food to be eaten at the site where it is provided, or at any other gathering site;
- Businesses that supply products needed for people to work from home;
- Businesses or manufacturers that supply other Essential Businesses with the support or supplies necessary to operate, including, building supply stores;
- Businesses that ship or deliver groceries, food, goods, or services directly to residences;
- Transportation providers providing transportation services necessary for Essential Activities and other purposes expressly authorized in this Declaration;
- Home-based care for seniors, adults, or children;
- Residential facilities including hotels, motels, shared rental units and similar facilities and shelters for seniors, adults, and children;
- Professional services, such as legal, accounting services, and real estate services;
- Childcare facilities, subject to the following provisions:
 - Childcare must be carried out in stable groups of 10 or fewer ("stable" means that the same 10 or fewer children are in the same group each day).
 - Children shall not change from one group to another.
 - If more than one group of children is cared for at one facility, each group shall be in a separate room. Groups shall not mix with each other.
 - Childcare providers shall remain solely with one group of children.

- All businesses which possess a license to sell alcoholic beverages for off premise consumption, but only via drive-thru or in parking lots or at curb.
- Manufacturing companies and other industries which apply for and are granted an exemption from the State of Georgia. These entities are automatically exempt from this Declaration for the first 48 hours to provide time to apply to the State for exemption.

Essential Infrastructure:

- Includes, but is not limited to, public works construction, construction and all related activities, water, sewer, electrical, roads and highways, public transportation, solid waste collection and removal, internet, and telecommunications systems, provided that they carry out those services or that work in compliance with the Social Distancing Requirements, to the extent possible

Essential Travel:

- Any travel related to the provision of or access to Essential Activities, Essential Businesses, Essential Governmental Functions, or Minimum Basic Operations.
- Travel to care for elderly, minors, dependents, persons with disabilities, or other vulnerable persons.
- Travel to or from educational institutions for purposes of receiving materials for distance learning, for receiving meals, and any other related services.
- Travel to return to a place of residence or for non-residents to return to their place of residence outside Franklin County.
- Travel required by law enforcement or court declaration.

Healthcare Operations:

- Include clinics, dentists, pharmacies, other healthcare facilities, healthcare suppliers, home healthcare services providers, mental health providers, or any related and/or ancillary healthcare services. Healthcare Operations also includes veterinary care and all healthcare services provided to animals. This definition should be construed broadly to avoid any impacts to the delivery of healthcare, broadly defined. Healthcare Operations does not include fitness and exercise gyms and similar facilities.